

Dog Wagging in the Persian Gulf?

News Analysis by J.J. Johnson - Posted: 10.13.00

It has become common to be suspicious whenever any kind of military action takes place with this administration. The recent attack on the U.S.S. Cole is no exception. Not only is the timing of this incident suspect, but the way it is being handled demonstrates an American weakness that was waiting to be exploited.

There will be those who will say, "There go those conspiracy theorists again." Granted, as this is only speculation. But perhaps getting above all the hype may lead others to ask more serious questions.

As we keep getting it drilled into our heads that this was a terrorist attack, this was anything but an act of terrorism. It was an act of war. "Terrorism" is the new, ugly word to describe any kind of hostile action against U.S. interests. I believe we use this term often because no one has the guts to say "war." Any U.S. warship in the area of the Persian Gulf should know they are operating in hostile waters. According to reports, we must conclude that the U.S.S. Cole forgot. And by sending in the FBI for evidence gathering, the United States is treating this as a crime scene rather than accepting the fact that in hostile waters, sailors eat, drink, and sleep in warrior mode. This shows the weakness of U.S. Military policy.

The proof of this weakness is also why one could conceive that this incident was clearly NOT an act of terrorism.

It was a phone call I heard on a Denver talk show that confirmed my suspicion. The young man who called obviously had Naval experience. He spoke about his past tours of duty in the Middle East. He discussed with the host how every sailor knew, once passing south of the Suez Canal, how the entire crew of every U.S. Warship remained at 'battle stations' while in the area. This has been the policy pre-dating the 1991 Gulf War. "Every man knew to have guns loaded at all times, and be ready for anything. We knew we were in hostile waters." He went on to say that a high-tech destroyer letting an unidentified boat get that close meant that, "someone was asleep at the switch."

He was right. But for someone (in this case, Cole's captain) to be asleep at the switch means he'd have to be completely incompetent to allow a rubber boat to come that close without proper identification. Since I have much more respect for U.S. Naval personnel, there could be another explanation.

A rubber raft packed with enough explosives to make a gaping hole through a half-inch steel plate - at 7.am local time. Let's analyze, shall we?

This rubber raft, carrying the two suicide bombers would have to have left port nearby, since it can't make a long sea journey. One can easily conclude that if there were any co-conspirators, they were port side. Wouldn't logic dictate an immediate response toward that Yemen sea port? The first reaction off ship should have been to seal off every port in the area.

But no word of that taking place, and if it did happen, there'd be no reason to be secret about it.

Next, the rubber boat itself. I'm sure there are explosive experts who can prove that a person can pack that much explosives on a rubber boat and keep it seaworthy, and even explain the huge hole in the side.

Could that same hole have been caused by a torpedo?

A stretch, you say?

Not if you imagine that those two suicidal folks have intelligence telling them where the boat was, and when it was arriving. That takes pretty good intel – meaning these were not just a couple guys out on a boat ride to “Allah”. And at 7:am that close to the equator (broad daylight), no one saw them coming?

Too strange. Now let's look at the politics...

Earlier this year, the Saudi states made it public that they did NOT like the U.S. conducting bombing runs on Iraq from their turf. There was even one AP story that reported the Saudi government ordering U.S. personnel out of their country. This attitude was shared by nearby states as well, such as Yemen. The Yemen President said shortly after the explosion that video taken of the blast led them to believe that it was NOT a rubber boat bomber. Experts said that the USS Cole damage photo clearly indicates that it could not have been an explosion from the inside of the ship – meaning it had to come from the outside.

And with all the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, why draw the United States closer to the conflict when merely threatening oil shipments would be easier and much more effective? Wouldn't those responsible know that the US would have no choice but to respond to this by taking such immediate actions like the one described above?

Conclusion: No Arab terrorist group in their right mind would have done this. It's non-productive on their end.

So, who benefits?

Take notice, that on October 12, 2000 what wasn't talked about – the presidential election, the plunging global markets, and the previous debate.

It's been said that whenever this administration gets in trouble, something blows up. After the last presidential debate, Gore is now in trouble. Hence, something blew up shortly thereafter.

In a recent Wall Street Journal editorial, columnist Mark Helprin made mention of “third world submarines” that the U.S. military had failed to address. If these subs from the Soviet “fire sale” exist, perhaps they have now “addressed” US Naval forces in the Gulf. It may sound crazy, but a lot less crazy than suicide in a rubber boat attack on an American Destroyer in broad daylight.

And now that we see all the politicians tripping over each other to get on the side of Israel (which the rest of the world recently criticized for their actions against the Palestinians), it seems that something, or someone wants to drag us into a Middle east conflict – right when oil prices are at a 10-year high. Not to mention reports of Iraq troop movements, and a sudden increase of international flight resuming to Baghdad. This does not make sense for anyone in the Arab world to attack a U.S. ship at a time when the political cards may be in their favor.

Can anyone else smell a wagging dog out here?

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